

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 1. (Currently amended) A system for managing ink information in a computer system
2 having a pen-based input tablet, the system comprising:
3 a pen driver coupled to the pen-based input/display tablet and configured to col-
4 lect and organize the ink information entered at the pen-based input tablet into ink
5 strokes;
6 an ink memory area organized into one or more ink phrase data structures; and
7 an ink manager coupled to the pen driver for receiving the ink strokes, the ink
8 manager having an ink phrase termination engine configured to examine the ink informa-
9 tion collected by the pen driver and, upon detecting the occurrence of an ink phrase ter-
10 mination event, to identify a respective end of an ink phrase to the ink manager,
11 whereby the ink information entered at the pen-based input tablet is associated
12 with a client application, and
13 the ink manager stores the ink strokes received prior to the ink phrase termination
14 event in a selected ink phrase data structure and, in response to receiving from the client
15 application a reference context affiliated with the un-recognized ink strokes of the ink
16 phrase, associates the reference context with the ink strokes.

1 2. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein
2 ~~the ink information entered at the pen-based input tablet is associated with a client~~
3 ~~application, and~~
4 the ink manager, in response to the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event,
5 is configured to pass the un-recognized ink strokes of the respective ink phrase to the cli-
6 ent application.

1 3. (Canceled)

1 4. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein the ink manager associates the
2 reference context with the un-recognized ink strokes by appending the reference context
3 to the selected ink phrase data structure.

1 5. (Original) The system of claim 2 wherein the ink phrase termination engine is config-
2 ured to initiate a time-out for each ink stroke and further wherein the termination engine
3 identifies the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event when the time-out expires
4 before the next sequential ink stroke is detected.

1 6. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the time-out has a value that is settable by a
2 user of the computer system.

1 7. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the pen-based input tablet has a surface and
2 the ink information generated by the tablet includes out-of-proximity data corresponding
3 to the pen being lifted above the surface of the tablet, and further wherein the termination
4 engine detects the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event upon detecting out-of-
5 proximity data from the tablet.

1 8. (Original) The system of claim 2 further comprising:
2 one or more handwriting recognition engines for generating hypotheses based on
3 the ink information entered at the pen-based tablet; and
4 a handwriting recognition manager coupled to both the ink manager and the one
5 or more handwriting recognition engines, the handwriting recognition manager config-
6 ured and arranged to coordinate operation of the one or more handwriting recognition
7 engines, wherein
8 the ink strokes received at the ink manager are passed to the handwriting
9 recognition manager, and
10 the ink manager notifies the handwriting recognition manager of the oc-
11 currence of each ink phrase termination event and, in response, the handwriting

12 recognition manager directs a selected handwriting recognition engine to generate
13 one or more hypotheses for the ink strokes corresponding to the respective ink
14 phrase.

1 9. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the handwriting recognition manager in co-
2 operation with the selected handwriting recognition engine employs a word segmentation
3 model to the ink strokes as they are received by the ink manager and, in response to de-
4 termining that a given ink stroke represents a new word, is permitted to issue an ink
5 phrase termination signal to the ink manager.

1 10. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein
2 the client application is configured to define at least one data entry field for dis-
3 play on the tablet and to establish corresponding boundary coordinates for the at least one
4 data entry field, and
5 the termination engine identifies the occurrence of an ink phrase termination
6 event when an ink stroke or portion thereof is outside of the boundary coordinates for the
7 at least one data entry field.

1 11. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the one or more hypotheses are provided to
2 the client application.

1 12. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the ink manager
2 in response to receiving from the client application a reference context affiliated
3 with the un-recognized ink strokes of the ink phrase, associates the reference context with
4 the ink strokes, and
5 in response to a request by the client application, returns the affiliated reference
6 context to the client application together with the one or more hypotheses.

1 13. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein, in response to receiving an indication that
2 the client application has consumed the un-recognized ink strokes, the ink manager di-
3 rects the handwriting recognition manager not to generate one or more hypotheses for the
4 ink strokes.

1 14. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein
2 in response to receiving the un-recognized ink strokes, the client application es-
3 tablishes a corresponding recognition context for the ink strokes, and
4 the handwriting recognition manager receives the recognition context and directs
5 the selected handwriting recognition engine to utilize the recognition context in generat-
6 ing the one or more hypotheses.

1 15. (Original) The system of claim 14 wherein the one or more hypotheses generated by
2 the selected handwriting recognition engine utilizing the recognition context from the cli-
3 ent application are provided to the client application.

1 16. (Currently amended) A method for managing ink information in a computer system
2 having a pen-based input tablet that may include an integrated display for generating ink
3 information as a pen is moved across the tablet, the method comprising the steps of:
4 receiving the ink information generated by the input tablet;
5 identifying when the pen is lifted from the tablet so as to organize the ink infor-
6 mation into corresponding ink strokes; ~~and~~
7 organizing the ink strokes into one or more ink phrases as defined by one or more
8 ink phrase termination events; and
9 in response to receiving a reference context from a [the] client application affili-
10 ated with the un-recognized ink strokes of the ink phrase, associating the reference con-
11 text with the ink strokes.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of organizing comprises the steps
2 of:

3 examining the ink information to determine whether an ink phrase termination
4 event has occurred; and

5 in response to the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event, segregating the
6 ink strokes received prior to the termination event in a designated ink phrase data struc-
7 ture.

1 18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 ~~wherein the ink information entered at~~
2 ~~the tablet is associated with a client application, the method~~ further comprising the step of
3 ~~optionally~~ passing the un-recognized ink strokes of the respective ink phrase to the client
4 application in response to the ink phrase termination event.

1 19. (Canceled).

1 20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 ~~16~~ wherein the reference context is as-
2 sociated with the respective ink phrase by appending the reference context to the desig-
3 nated ink phrase data structure.

1 21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 ~~wherein the ink information enter at the~~
2 ~~tablet is associated with a client application, the method~~ further comprising the steps of:
3 generating one or more recognition hypotheses for the ink strokes of the ink
4 phrase data structure; and
5 passing the one or more recognition hypotheses to the client application together
6 with the respective reference context.

1 22. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the ink information from the input tablet
2 further includes out-of-proximity data which corresponds to the pen being lifted above a
3 surface of the tablet, the method further comprising the steps of:

4 examining the ink information to detect out-of-proximity data;
5 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event in response to de-
6 tecting out-of-proximity data.

1 23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 wherein ~~the ink information entered at~~
2 ~~the tablet is associated with a client application, and~~ the client application defines a form
3 for display on the tablet, the form having one or more data entry fields for receiving
4 handwritten information, the method further comprising the steps of:
5 receiving a set of bounding coordinates established by the client application for
6 the one or more data entry fields;
7 comparing the ink information from the input tablet with the bounding coordi-
8 nates of the one or more data entry fields; and
9 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event in response to de-
10 tecting ink information moving outside of the bounding coordinates for at least one of the
11 one or more data entry fields.

1 24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the computer system includes
2 at least one recognition engine, the method further comprising the steps of:
3 ~~optionally~~ configuring the recognition engine to apply a word segmentation model
4 to the ink strokes as they are organized; and
5 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event when the word seg-
6 mentation model determines that a given ink stroke is part of a new word relative to an
7 immediately prior ink stroke.

1 25. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising the steps of:
2 initiating a time-out mechanism upon receipt of each ink data point; and
3 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event when the time-out
4 expires prior to receiving a next sequential ink data point.

1 26. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the ink information from the input tablet
2 further includes out-of-proximity data which corresponds to the pen being lifted above a
3 surface of the tablet, the method further comprising the steps of:

4 examining the ink information to detect out-of-proximity data;
5 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event in response to de-
6 tecting out-of-proximity data.

1 27. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium containing executable program
2 instructions for organizing ink information that is generated by a pen-based input tablet
3 as a pen moves across the tablet and is associated with a client application, the executable
4 program instructions comprising program instructions for:

5 receiving the ink information generated by the input tablet;
6 identifying when the pen is lifted from the tablet so as to organize the ink infor-
7 mation into corresponding ink strokes;

8 examining the ink information to determine whether an ink phrase termination
9 event has occurred;

10 in response to the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event, segregating the
11 ink strokes received prior to the termination event in a designated ink phrase data struc-
12 ture; and

13 in response to receiving a reference context from the client application affiliated
14 with the un-recognized ink strokes of the ink phrase, associating the reference context
15 with the ink strokes.

1 28. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 27 ~~wherein the ink in-~~
2 ~~formation entered at the tablet is associated with a client application~~, the medium further
3 comprising program instructions for passing the un-recognized ink strokes of the respec-
4 tive ink phrase to the client application in response to the ink phrase termination event.

1 29. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 28 further comprising program
2 instructions for, in response to receiving an indication that the client application has con-
3 sumed the un-recognized ink strokes, blocking recognition of the ink strokes.

1 30. (Canceled)

1 31. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 27 wherein the refer-
2 ence context is associated with the ink strokes by appending the reference context to the
3 designated ink phrase data structure.

1 32. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 27 ~~wherein the ink in-~~
2 ~~formation entered at the input tablet is associated with a client application, the computer~~
3 ~~readable medium~~ further comprising program instructions for:
4 generating one or more recognition hypotheses for the ink strokes of the ink
5 phrase data structure; and
6 passing the one or more recognition hypotheses to the client application.

1 33. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 32 further comprising program
2 instructions for:
3 in response to receiving a reference context from the client application affiliated
4 with the un-recognized in strokes of the ink phrase, associating the reference context with
5 the ink strokes; and
6 in response to a request from the client application, returning the reference con-
7 text to the client application along with the one or more recognition hypotheses.

1 34. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 32 wherein the client application
2 establishes a recognition context in response to receiving the un-recognized ink strokes of
3 the ink phrase and the program instructions from generating one or more recognition hy-

4 potheses further comprise program instructions for utilizing the recognition context estab-
5 lished by the client application.

1 35. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 27 wherein the program instruc-
2 tions for examining comprise program instructions for:

3 initiating a time-out mechanism upon receipt of each ink data point; and

4 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event when the time-out
5 expires prior to receiving a next sequential ink data point.

1 36. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 35 wherein the ink information
2 further includes out-of-proximity data which corresponds to the pen being lifted above a
3 surface of the tablet, and the program instructions for examining further comprise pro-
4 gram instructions for:

5 examining the ink information to detect out-of-proximity data;

6 identifying the occurrence of an ink phrase termination event in response to de-
7 tecting out-of-proximity data.